

NOTES ON SYAGRUS MICROPHYLLA BURRET\*

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In the process of preparing a revision of the genus Syagrus Mart., I discovered that the holotype of S. microphylla (apparently the only specimen collected) was destroyed during World War II at the Berlin-Dahlem Herbarium. Recent collections of this species, however, have enabled me to clarify its status and to choose a neotype.

Syagrus microphylla Burret, Fedde Rep. Nov. Spec. 32:111.1933.

Holotype: Brazil, Bahia, Serra do Espinhaço, östlich Monte Chapeu, open plain, April 1932 (Werdermann 3366-B, destroyed). Neotype: Brazil, Bahia, Serra do Tombador, base of Morro de Chapeu, 6 km S. of town of Morro de Chapeu, elev. 1100 m, Feb., 1971 (H. Irwin, R. M. Harley and G. L. Smith 32470-UB).

Acaulescent, often with a prostrate or flattened appearance. Petiole 7-12 cm long, margins smooth, sheathing base about 7 cm long; rachis of leaf 29-45 cm long, pinnae 20-21 pairs, middle ones in tight clusters of 2-3, densely glaucous, especially above, 10-22 cm long, 0.8-2.0 (2.5) cm wide, tips obtuse and asymmetrical; expanded part of spathe 13-15 cm long and 2-3 cm wide, peduncular part 23-30 cm long, mostly glabrous, plicate-sulcate outside; branched part of spadix 9-13 cm long, peduncle 17-31 cm long, branches 4-6 in number, lower ones 5-10 cm long; male flowers 4-6 mm long, sepals 0.5-1 mm long; female flowers more or less triangular in shape, 5-7 mm long, 3-5 mm in diam.; fruit rounded to ovoid, 1.5-2.2 cm long, 1.0-1.3 cm in diam., persistent perianth 0.5-0.7 cm high, endocarp woody, about 1 mm thick, one locule, seed not seen.

Specimens examined: Brazil, Bahia (see neotype above); Serra do Tombador, 2 km S.W. of Morro de Chapeu, on road to Utinga, caatinga vegetation, assoc. with Allagoptera and various cacti, very local for a radius of about 5 km on white sandy soil, common here, Aug. 1976, Glassman 13018, 13019, 13020, 13021, 13023, 13025, 13026, 13027, 13028, 13029, 13030 (CHI, SP).

Vernacular names: none recorded

Distribution: Brazil, state of Bahia, apparently endemic to the Morro de Chapeu mountain area, primarily on white sandy soil in the caatinga.

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Burret (1933) was in error when he placed Monte Chapeo (Morro de Chapeu) in the Serra do Espinhaço. No mountain range of this name exists in the area, but there is a Serra do Espinhaço running through Diamantina, in the state of Minas Gerais. Morro de Chapeu properly belongs in the Serra do Tombador mountain range. The above cited specimens match Burret's description of S. microphylla fairly closely, and undoubtedly were collected in the same general area of the type locality; therefore, I have chosen one of these specimens (Irwin et al. 32470) as the neotype (fig. 1).

Syagrus microphylla is a distinct species, apparently without any very close relatives. It is easily distinguished from other taxa in the genus by its acaulescent, prostrate habit, small densely glaucous pinnae (10-22 cm long and 0.8-2 cm wide) which are tightly clustered, small triangular female flowers (5-7 mm long) and small fruits (1.5-2.2 cm long). Even though they are in different sections of the key based on leaf clustering, S. microphylla seems to have its closest affinity with S. werdermannii Burret (see Glassman, 1971). Both species are acaulescent, with small leaves and about the same number of pinnae, male and female flowers with similar dimensions, fruits approximately the same size, and both are narrow endemics in the caatinga of Bahia (S. werdermannii is confined to the Caetitê area, about 300 km southwest of Morro de Chapeu). They differ from each other mainly in the prostrate rather than upright habit; the shorter, densely clustered pinnae rather than longer, single or loosely clustered pinnae; and the fewer (4-6 vs. 11) and shorter (5.7 cm vs. 22 cm) spadix branches.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Burret, M. 1933. *Palmae Neogaeae* III. *Fedde Rep. Nov. Spec.* 32: 102-115.
- Glassman, S. F. 1971. Rediscovery of Syagrus werdermannii Burret. *Fieldiana Bot.* 34: 1-10.



Figure 1. Neotype of *Syagrus microphylla* Burret.  
Irwin et al. 32470 (UB).